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Economic and environmental questions: sustainable development

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), on the basis of informal consultations

Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twentieth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and 67/221 of 21 December 2012, both on a smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the category of least developed countries,

Recalling also that, in its resolution 59/209, the General Assembly decided that graduation from the least developed country category would become effective three years after the date on which the Assembly had taken note of the recommendation of the Committee for Development Policy to graduate a country from the category and that, during the three-year period, the country would remain on the list of least developed countries and maintain the advantages associated with membership on that list, and that, in its resolution 67/221, the Assembly decided to take note of the decisions of the Economic and Social Council regarding the graduation of countries from and the inclusion in the list of least developed countries at the first session of the Assembly following the adoption of such decisions by the Council,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, by which the Assembly endorsed the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[2] whose overarching goal is to overcome the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category, and, guided by that overarching goal, focuses the national policies of least developed countries and international support measures during the decade on the five specific objectives

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

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described in the Programme of Action, with the aim of enabling half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/15 of 14 November 2014, by which the Assembly endorsed the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway",

Recalling also its resolutions 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, 2007/34 of 27 July 2007, 2013/20 of 24 July 2013, 2015/11 of 10 June 2015 and 2016/15 of 26 July 2016,

Reiterating its conviction that no country graduating from the least developed country category should have its development progress disrupted or reversed,

Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining stability in the criteria and in the application of the established procedures for inclusion in and graduation from the least developed country category so as to ensure the credibility of the process and, consequently, of the category of least developed countries, while giving due consideration to the specific challenges and vulnerabilities and the development needs of countries potentially graduating or being considered for graduation from the least developed country category,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twentieth session;[3]

2. *Notes* the work done by the Committee on (a) leaving no one behind, in accordance with the theme of the high-level segment of the 2018 session of the Economic and Social Council, (b) the triennial review of the list of least developed countries, (c) monitoring the development progress of countries graduating and graduated from the list of least developed countries, (d) improved assistance for graduating least developed countries and (e) the voluntary national reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;[4]

3. *Requests* the Committee, at its twenty-first session, to examine and make recommendations on the annual theme of the 2019 session of the Council;

4. *Also requests* the Committee to monitor the development progress of countries graduating and graduated from the category of least developed countries, in accordance with paragraph 21 of General Assembly resolution 67/221;

5. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that Bhutan be graduated from the list of least developed countries, notes that the Committee finds reasonable the request by Bhutan to align the effective graduation date with the end of the country's twelfth national development plan in 2023, and recommends that the General Assembly take note of that recommendation and the finding;

6. *Also endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that Solomon Islands be graduated from the list of least developed countries, and recommends that the General Assembly take note of that recommendation;

7. *Recalls* the recognition in the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020[5] of the importance of the reviews by the Committee of the graduation criteria for the least developed countries, and the recommendation that the reviews be comprehensive, taking into account all aspects of the evolving international development context,

[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 13* (E/2018/33).
[4] General Assembly resolution 70/1.
[5] General Assembly resolution 70/294, annex.

including relevant agendas, and in this regard takes note of the decision of the Committee to implement a multi-year work programme for a comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria, and looks forward to its outcome;

8. *Takes note* of the recommendation of the Committee that a category of countries facing extreme vulnerability to climate change and other environmental shocks be created, and decides not to endorse that recommendation;

9. *Also takes note* of the recommendation of the Committee that Kiribati be placed in a category of countries facing extreme vulnerability to climate change and other environmental shocks, and decides not to endorse that recommendation, and further takes note of the recommendation of the Committee that Kiribati be graduated from the list of least developed countries, and decides to defer the consideration of that recommendation to no later than 2021;

10. *Further takes note* of the recommendation of the Committee that Tuvalu be placed in a category of countries facing extreme vulnerability to climate change and other environmental shocks, and decides not to endorse that recommendation; and recalls the recommendation of the Committee that Tuvalu be graduated from the list of least developed countries, and decides to defer the consideration of that recommendation to no later than 2021;

11. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that Sao Tome and Principe be graduated from the list of least developed countries, notes that the Committee finds reasonable the request by Sao Tome and Principe to postpone its effective graduation date to 2024, so as to enable it to enact necessary internal reforms and align its transition strategy with its national development plan, and recommends that the General Assembly take note of that recommendation and the finding;

12. *Notes* that, as part of the existing procedures, all least developed countries, including those not yet graduated, will be included in the 2021 triennial review of the least developed country category;

13. *Requests* the entities of the United Nations development system to provide assistance to graduating countries in the formulation and implementation of their national transition strategies and to consider country-specific support for graduated countries for a fixed period of time and in a predictable manner;

14. *Acknowledges with satisfaction* the contributions made by the Committee to the various aspects of the programme of work of the Council, reiterates its invitation for increased interaction between the Council and the Committee, and encourages the Chair and, as necessary, other members of the Committee to continue that practice, as specified in Council resolution 2011/20 of 27 July 2011, within existing resources and as appropriate.